IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a distributed business transaction in response to a directory assistance request from a telephone customer using a computer network comprising:

maintaining a database including a plurality of directory listings, wherein each listing is associated with a referral phone number, at least one keyword and a bid amount a directory listing owner is willing to pay for a single telephone referral;

receiving a directory assistance request in the form of a keyword from the customer;

identifying the directory listings having keyword terms generating a match with the request;

ordering the identified directory listings into a phone number result list in accordance with the values of the bid mounts for the identified directory listings;

selecting one of the directory listings;

generating a paid referral business transaction and associating it with the listing owner's advertising account;

generating one or a plurality of derivative business transactions to execute the business processes involved in the referral transaction;

wherein at least one business process involved in the referral transaction comprises a hierarchical multi-step automated process that includes two or more component processes performed in series, a first component process of which is configured to process data comprising a set of transaction data encapsulated as a package; repackage the transaction data, including context data associated with the first component process; and send the repackage transaction and context data to a next component process; and

wherein each directory listing in the phone number result list includes an associated set of transaction data; and generating a paid referral business transaction includes automatically

sending the set of transaction data associated with the selected one of the directory listings to a respective first or only stage of each of said one or a plurality of derivative business transactions.

2. (Previously Presented) A system for processing a distributed business transaction in response to a directory assistance request from a telephone customer using a computer network comprising:

one or more processors configured to:

encapsulate the business transaction parameters in a separate transaction container that can be passed as a complete package to disparately located business transactions;

send the transaction container to one or a plurality of business processes;

after executing each business process, include a resulting system state as the transaction context for the particular business process; and

add successive transaction contexts to the transaction container in such a way that the sequence of initial state, desired operation, input parameters and resulting state fully describes each step of the multi-step distributed transaction.

3. (New) The system of claim 2, wherein said one or more processors are configured to add successive transaction contexts to the transaction container at least in part by encapsulating said transaction containers, and any previous encapsulation added thereto in connection with any prior step of the multi-step distributed transaction, in an encapsulation that includes a current step context data.

4. (New) The system of claim 3, wherein said current step context data includes one or more of an initial state, a desired operation, input parameters, and a resulting state associated with the current step.

5. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said set of transaction data comprises a referral transaction container that encapsulates the set of transaction data.

6. (New) The method of claim 5, wherein the container encapsulates all data required to process said paid referral business transaction.

7. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said next component process is configured to process the transaction data and repackage the transaction data by encapsulating the transaction data and the context data associated with the first component process in an encapsulation that includes a next component process context data associated with the next component process.